

For Immediate Release

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*This Legislation is Estimated to Provide 116,000 Uninsured Children in*

*New Jersey with Health Care Coverage*

Washington, D.C. – Today, Rep. Sires joined a majority in the House of Representatives in support of the final version of bipartisan legislation to provide health care to 11 million children in modest-income families. The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization Act passed by a vote of 290 to 135. The bill will now be sent to President Obama's desk for his signature, and he has indicated he will sign it into law later this afternoon.

"I've fought for this legislation since I took office and I am very pleased that President Obama will be signing this key bill later today to provide health care coverage for 11 million children," stated Congressman Sires. "This is the same legislation that President Bush vetoed twice in the last Congress. Providing health coverage for America's children is the change America needs."

"No child in my district should ever go without medical care," said Sires. "I was proud to support a plan to improve the health of 116,000 children currently uninsured in New Jersey, reduce the costly use of emergency rooms for primary care, and move us closer to providing every child in our nation with affordable, high-quality health care."

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was created in 1997 to provide health care coverage for children in families that earn too little to afford health insurance for their children, but too much to qualify for Medicaid. This bipartisan bill reauthorizes SCHIP through FY 2013. In New Jersey alone, this legislation will maintain coverage for the 150,277 children

currently enrolled in New Jersey's FamilyCare Program, while also helping the state provide care for the 116,000 children currently eligible for the program but not yet enrolled. Finally, this bill allows families enrolled in health insurance through their employer, but who lack dental coverage, to qualify for supplemental dental insurance through SCHIP.

“Covering more eligible children is not only the right thing to do – it makes good economic sense for taxpayers who will save money by preventing the need for very expensive emergency room care in the future,” pointed out Sires. “In these tough economic times, providing access to health care for more children will hopefully provide peace of mind to the struggling parents in my district and around the country.”

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